

Companion Web Site  
Examples, useful links, and more  
Additional information

Philip Crowder with David A. Crowder

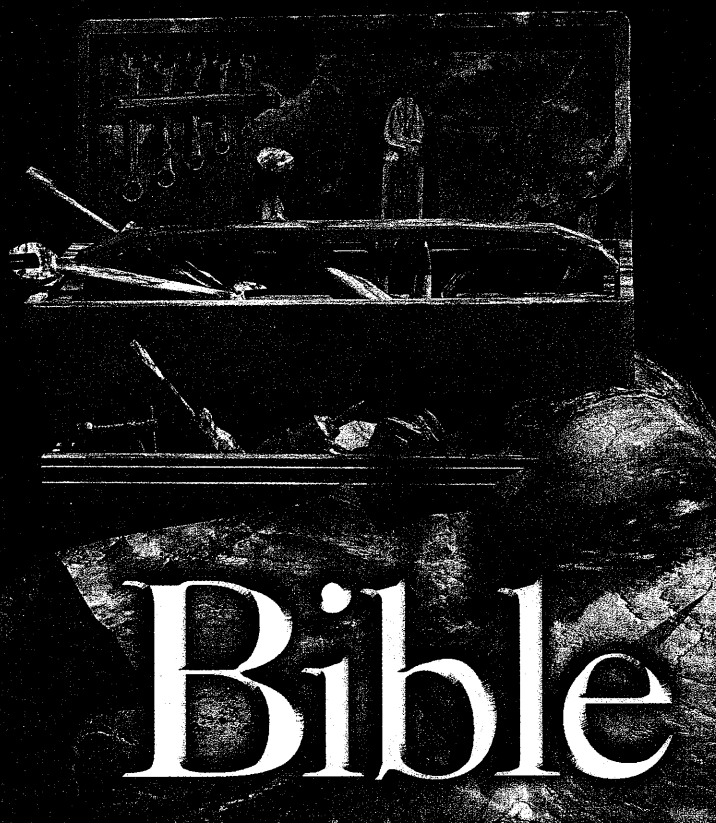
# Creating Web Sites

Third Edition

Master the major  
site-building tools

Go 2.0 with multimedia  
and interactivity

Create a store and  
cash in on e-commerce



# Bible

The book you need to succeed!

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## Dos and Don'ts of Web Site Development

The reasons for good Web site design are obvious. You want visitors to your site to have a pleasant productive experience when they do business with you. You not only want them to like what you have to offer but also to appreciate the ease and convenience with which their online shopping is done. You want customers to come back.

### Tips for good Web sites

Here are ways to develop customer-friendly Web sites:

- *Take a minimalist approach* — Customers come to your site for the content, not the clutter. Limit the distracting eye candy.
- *Make navigation easy to use and understand* — This means providing rapid access to desired content within a few clicks.
- *Make the Web site fast-loading* — Many people still use a dial-up connection to the Internet. Too much animation can slow down the rendering of a Web page.
- *Skip the sticky advertisements that follow the cursor around like a lost pup* — They interfere with the reading of content and break the user's train of thought. Many users may soon remember those sites and avoid them. There are always others.
- *Skip the counters* — Why broadcast this information? What do they add to your site? In fact, some amounts could be quite small and convince the visitor that your site is not popular.
- *Keep the information on your site current* — This is not a Web-specific issue, but it is implicit in the Information Age that information should be accurate and up to date.
- *Be grammatically correct* — There are potential customers out there who believe that if you can't spell, you can't be very good at your business, either. They will go elsewhere.
- *Do not assume your Web designers can spell or write a grammatically correct sentence* — Check your Web sites. Without being specific, there was actually an academic institution's Web site in Statesville, North Carolina (state-funded, of course), that had mindless grammatical and spelling errors.
- *Be very sparing of sound effects or music* — Not all people have the same tastes. Not all people have the same audio cards or speakers. Also, keep in mind your visitors may be browsing to your site at work and may annoy their coworkers.
- *Use thumbnails as a good aid to site content and navigation* — Make certain that all thumbnails are clickable, that they're relevant to the content, and that the images they link to load fast. Do not clutter the page with them.
- *Make contact info obvious* — Even on a home page, include contact info such as business name, address, e-mail address, fax number, and phone number — maybe even two or three, such as generic office number, technical support number, and customer support number. This saves clients a lot of time, and they do not need to guess which

## Part I

### Laying the Foundation

of three or more possible links actually contains the phone number they are so desperately seeking.

- *Make fonts readable* — Have high contrast with the background and, if you use them at all, do not put significant amounts of light-colored fonts against dark backgrounds.
- *Be conscious of backgrounds* — Consider white to be the background of choice. Notice the use of white backgrounds in some very high-traffic sites such as Google, Yahoo! and Drudge Report. White backgrounds make the content easier to read and enable graphics to stand out.
- *Be conscious of your user's screen resolution* — Screen resolutions can run from 640 x 480 on up. Therefore, when developing sites, be sure to make table widths flexible, not fixed.
- *Field-test the site using real, live, honest-to-goodness people who know nothing about your business* — Of course, people who designed the site or use it daily are not going to find it user-unfriendly.

The following are some sources for good Web-site design, advice, and techniques:

- [www.webreference.com](http://www.webreference.com)
- [websitesforgood.com](http://websitesforgood.com)
- [www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html](http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html)

### Top ways to have bad sites

On the other side of the coin, here are ways to develop customer-unfriendly (that is, bad) Web sites:

- Have links that don't work.
- Have messages that a Flash Macromedia advertisement is loading when you click on a company's URL and omit the Skip Intro button.
- Have a form completely clear if a customer makes any mistake anywhere in inputting information into the form.
- Have shipping charges appear on the very last screen of an online order.
- Do not specify the date, Social Security card, or phone number formats required for input.
- Have rapid, repetitive animation or video shorts, and use lots of them.
- Have short segments of loud annoying music — and loop them.
- Use lots of different colors, themes, and unrelated images and motifs on your home page and throughout the site.
- Use font colors that are practically indistinguishable from the background.
- Have your home page cluttered with countless links using different fonts and backgrounds.

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Chapter 2 b  
mobile Web

- Have links unrelated to the main purpose(s) of the Web site.
- Do not use a spellchecker.

All of these faux pas have occurred, countless times, on real Web sites. Several examples of bad Web sites may currently be found at such locations as:

- [www.webpagesthatsuck.com](http://www.webpagesthatsuck.com)
- [www.worstoftheweb.com](http://www.worstoftheweb.com)
- <http://www.bad-websites.com/>

## Summary

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This chapter has explained the background and development of Web browsers and reviewed their various features. This chapter also touched upon Web protocols and gave a very basic outline of a Web page using HTML tags.

The purpose of a Web browser is to fetch, decode, and display content from hypertext documents. As the content of Web sites became more sophisticated as the result of the development of more complex audio and graphics programs, the Web browser technologies become equally sophisticated to be able to fetch, decode, and display the contents rapidly, accurately, and securely. The development of one fed upon the other technologies.

Chapter 2 briefly reviews some popular Web design applications, discusses designing for the mobile Web, and makes suggestions for additional freeware/shareware graphics applications.